

HR HIGHLIGHTS

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leagues who have made a tremendous impact on our organization. They are:

Marie Favicchio
Sarah Etheridge
Rod Meader
John Puphal
Bob Pirie

We will miss them and we wish them the very best in their retirement!

Ventris C. Gibson

Greetings and welcome to this edition of **HR Highlights!**

The Office of Personnel Management's Human Resources Management Council (HRMC) is focusing on streamlining the Federal hiring process. By taking on this challenge, we have identified an ambitious goal which is necessary to attract potential employees. The HRMC is specifically looking at the Federal hiring process and identifying ways in which the process can be streamlined, automated and more user friendly. OPM would like to change the general public's perception that Federal agencies take too

long to hire. I have taken on this challenge and my staffs are working diligently on streamlining the hiring process.

Featured in this month's edition are VA employment statistics, the latest in workforce and succession planning, and an article on creative collaborative leadership. Also, the revised VA Employee Handbook is now available online at vaww.va.gov/ohrm under "What's New."

Congratulations to the latest SES appointees (p.3) and Leadership VA selectees for 2002 (p.7). Finally, it is with mixed emotion that we celebrate the retirement of five col-

The Office of Workforce Planning

The Office of Workforce Planning has initiated a work group to examine the state of VA's human resources (HR) profession and to make recommendations regarding its future. Participants from each administration, as well as Central Office, are part of this committee and have begun a series of dialogues. In December, the members came together in a two-day face-to-face meeting. Ms. Ventris Gibson communicated her perspec-

tives within the framework of an overview of human resources management issues. Topics included a discussion of VA's stakeholders, various environmental elements affecting HR, the present state and desired future state of VA's human resources profession, as well as impediments that must be dealt with in reaching the desired future state. Input from a recent field survey to HR managers was also available to inform the work group members. The meeting resulted in the formation of three teams

devoted to researching these issues based on a framework of major areas within human resources: staff development, recruiting and retention, and marketing/business communications. The committee plans to meet again in February to present their research findings and continue the dialogue.

**For additional service, contact
Laura Shugrue, 202-273-9925**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Scores VA

Annually, VA receives a scorecard from OPM on the quality and timeliness of our Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) submissions.

Timeliness - VA continues to score low in timeliness in monthly CPDF dynamics file submissions. Only 78 percent of VA's FY 2001 personnel actions were reported timely. While this is an improvement over FY 2000 scorecard (75 percent timeliness), VA is still well below OPM's standard of 90 percent. Last September, OHRM issued Human Resources Management Letter 05-01-05 (vawww.va.gov/ohrm/hrml/HRML05.pdf) concerning the importance of timely processing and approval of personnel actions. OHRM also began sending monthly notices to remind processing and records staff about end

of month processing deadlines for timely entering actions into PAID/OLDE. I urge each manager and HR professional in VA to make every attempt to improve the timely processing of personnel actions for our employees. In most cases, requests for personnel action (SF 52) should be submitted to the HR office not later than the Wednesday before the effective date of the action or 5 workdays before the end of the month, whichever is earlier. HR offices should timely process personnel actions, giving special attention to ensure that actions effective near the end of a month are processed prior to the end of that month's processing deadline for PAID/OLDE input.

Accuracy - VA also scored low in accuracy - ranking last, when compared to scores of 5 other large agencies. The

Workforce Information Systems Team (WIST) has analyzed CPDF error reports and is working with the Austin Automation Center and OPM staff to fix programming errors that are impacting the accuracy of VA's CPDF submissions. In addition, WIST staff conducted two Processing and Records (P&R) Training Courses last fall and is working to schedule at least two more in 2002. OHRM will also explore other training options for P&R staff and will completely update the PAID coding manual. These actions, combined with your increased attention to the work in this area will yield much improved CPDF scorecard results next year.

**For additional service, contact
Larry Staley at 202-273-9752**

CPDF Submissions
Rated Low
in Accuracy and

The Next Generation Work Group

The Office of Workforce Planning (OWP) hosted VA's Next Generation Work Group to obtain the input of aspiring VA employees on recruitment, retention, and development issues that face the Department. The group presented its

findings to the VA's Strategic Management Council (SMC) on January 10. The group identified the following key recommendations regarding how VA can address recruitment, retention, and development issues, particularly for younger employees:

- Develop a national marketing campaign to improve the image of VA.
- Improve VA compensation and benefits.
- Create a performance-based organization.
- Develop a centralized professional development program.
- Create a VA Young Professionals Association to serve as a resource for new ideas.



The SMC was very appreciative of and receptive to the group's efforts and looks forward to further involving employees throughout the Department in workforce planning efforts to ensure that VA maintains a high quality, diverse staff to serve our Nation's veterans. The group's full report will soon be made available to all VA employees through the Department's Workforce and Succession Planning Website.

**For additional service, contact
Laura Shugrue at 202-273-9925**

CONGRATULATIONS!
SES Appointees

Rita Reed, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget
Office of Management

Forest Farley, Director, VAMC Lexington

Steven Kleinglass, Chief Operations Officer
VISN 13

Judith Caden, Director, Education Service
Veterans Benefits Administration

Don H. Pratt, Associate Chief Financial Officer for Revenue
Veterans Health Administration

John D. Daigh, Associate Director, Medical Consultation and Review
Office of Inspector General

Claude D. Hutchison, Jr., Director, Asset Enterprise Management
Office of Management

Women in Technology Conference

Jan Stanley, a member of the Human Resources Management Programs and Policies Service (051), represented VA and the Federal Government at a Women in Technology Conference at the Ritz Carlton



in Tyson's Corner on January 17, 2002. Jan served as one of three HR expert panel members addressing the crisis created by the collapse of dot-coms. Primary attention was focused on recruiting challenges faced by women in the public and private sectors. Women

in Technology is a professional women's organization dedicated to furthering the careers of women in the field of Information Technology. There were 240 attendees at this conference.

**For additional service, contact
Jan Stanley at 202-273-5938**

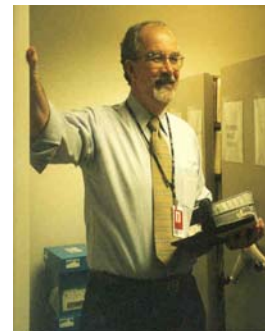
HR Conference Calls

Join us on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 3:00 PM (EST) for some lively discussion on HR topics of relevance and interest. Mark your calendars now for the next quarter of conference calls:

April 10th, May 8th, June 12th

The call-in number is 1-800-767-1750. Hope to hear you then!

**For additional service, contact
Kenneth Quantock, 202-273-9753**



Revised VA Employee Handbook

The recently revised VA Employee Handbook is now available on the OHRM intranet website at <http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm> under "What's New." This updated handbook contains general information for use in new employee orientation. It covers such topics as the structure of VA, our mission, employment systems, classification of jobs, pay, hours of duty, benefits, employee rights and responsibilities, training, advancements

and awards, and locations of VA facilities. As a "first", this document is being web published (rather than printed and distributed through the depot) for ease in access and updates. Local facilities may choose to download the files, print the document and provide it along with locally developed information to all new employees, or refer the new employees to the

website. Since this revised version contains much more information than before, current employees may also be interested in viewing a copy on the web. This new handbook replaces the Employee Handbook issued June 1987 and reprinted September 1991.

Employee Handbook
vaww.va.gov/ohrm

For additional service, contact
Kenneth Quantock
at 202-273-9753
Carol Mellen
at 202-273-9827

The Secrets of Creative Collaboration

The following are excerpts from Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration by Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman (Perseus Books, 1997). Three major components of skillful collaborative leadership:

1. A collaborative leader creates a safe, clear, and cohesive environment for the group's work. He or she:

- °Functions as a kind of central switching station, monitoring the flow of ideas and work and keeping both going as smoothly as possible
- °Ensures that every group member has ownership of the project
- °Develops among team members the sense of being part of a unique cadre
- °Works as a catalyst, mediating between outside world and the inner world of the group
- °Provides avenues for highly effective communication among team members

2. A collaborative leader has a mastery of boundary-spanning skills, including capitalizing on the group's diversity. He or she:

- °Develops new projects in a highly collaborative manner, taking good ideas from anyone involved in the process
- °Is a dealer in hopes rather than guarantees
- °Reduces the stress levels of the members of the group through humor and creating group cohesion
- °Focuses on encouraging and enabling the group to find and draw on inner resources to meet the goal
- °Uses mediation to eliminate the divisive win-lose element from arguments balanced with open but clear decision making

3. A collaborative leader inspires the group through vision and character. He or she:

- °Realizes that you can only accomplish extraordinary achievements by involving excellent people who can do things that you cannot
- °Is absolutely trustworthy and worthy of respect
- °Transforms a dream into a compelling vision for the group's work
- °Conveys a sense of humility and integrity
- °Has the courage to speak of personal fears
- °Models the ability to cut through unconscious collusion and raise awareness of potential red flags
- °Maintains grace in a crisis

Director, National Veterans Employment Program Keynote Speaker in North Little Rock

On Wednesday, February 20, 2002, Mr. Willie Hensley, Director, National Veterans Employment Program, participated, as the keynote speaker in the Black History Month celebration at the Eugene J. Towbin VA Healthcare Center in North Little Rock, AR. The program focused on the National Theme for Black History Month, "The Color Line Revisited: Is Racism Dead?" Mr. Hensley highlighted the contributions of African Americans in the military to the growth and prosperity of our Nation. He traced the accomplishments and achievements of African Americans during the Revo-

lutionary War, the Civil War and World War I & II, emphasizing how school history books omitted the courageous acts and deeds of African Americans and other minorities. The event was attended by Mr. George Gray, Director, Central Arkansas Healthcare System and Commissioner Donna Massey, County Commissioner for Pulaski County. During the visit, Mr. Hensley toured the VA's Homeless Intake facility, the transitional housing facility, and the domiciliary program at North Little Rock.

For additional service, contact Mr. Hensley at 202-273-6775

HR Flexibilities Study

The Deputy Secretary requested a study be conducted to review VA's use of existing human resources management flexibilities to determine the extent to which VA uses all available options for recruiting and retaining a quality workforce. We are reviewing the recruitment, staffing, classification and pay systems processes to identify opportunities for improvement within the current system that will not require HR legislation.

As part of the study, we are to develop recommendations to maximize VA's ability to use existing flexibilities

within current law and regulations. Since VA's Title 38 HR system is viewed generally as a "flexibility", most of the study's focus is on the Title 5 processes. Information gathering has been completed and the analysis phase of the study is almost completed. A briefing on the study findings and recommendations will be presented to the Secretary's Strategic Management Council in March. The results of the study will be available after the briefing and will be summarized in a future newsletter.

For additional service, contact Dennis Curley at 202-273-9816

Statistics You Can Use...

On VA's rolls as of January 31, 2002, there were 223,786 employees. Among all departments and agencies of the federal government, only the Department of Defense has a larger work force.

Of the total number of VA employees, 201,803 were in the Veterans Health Administration, 13,118 in the Veterans Benefits Administration, 1,416 in the National Cemetery System, 3,278 in the Veterans Canteen Service and 381 in the Revolving Supply Fund. The remainder - 3,790 employees - were in various staff offices. More than 57 percent of VA employees are women.

VA is a leader in hiring veterans. About 53 percent of all male employees are veterans. As of January 31, 2002, VA had 8,462 women employees who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. About 62 percent of male and 35 percent of female veteran employees served during the Vietnam War. Nearly 7 percent of all VA employees are disabled veterans.

For additional service, contact Jeannine Yoo at 202-273-5989

A HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO LVA 2002 SELECTEES (Veterans Health Administration)

Terry S. Atienza	Chief Operations Officer	Prescott, AZ
Sherri L. Bauch	Deputy Field Director-West Women Veterans Health Program	Tacoma, WA
Carolyn E. Bechtold	Vice President, Surgical Specialty Care Service Line	Pittsburgh, PA
David H. Berger, M.D.	Operative Care Line Executive	Houston, TX
D. Renee Bruce	Health System Specialist and National Childcare Program Manager	Baltimore, MD
Joanne M. Carney	Public Relations Manager	Leeds, MA
Rosalyn L. Cole	Business Manager, Medical/Surgical Specialty Care Line	VISN 10, Cleveland, OH
Ruth White Davis, Ph.D.	Pharmacy Clinical Operations Coordinator	New Orleans, LA
Susan E. Dierker	Medical Care Line Nurse Executive	Houston, TX
Laureen G. Doloresco	Associate Chief of Nursing for Spinal Cord Injury, Rehabilitation, and Mental Health Programs	Tampa, FL
Lynn M. Donek	Quality Manager	St. Cloud, MN
Susan E. George	Associate Chief, Nursing Service-Surgery Special Care Areas	Richmond, VA
David R. Gray, Pharm. D.	Chief, Support Services Healthcare Group	Long Beach, CA
Beverly Green-Rashad	Operative Care Line Nurse Executive	Houston, TX
William K. Grossman, M.D.	Chief of Staff	Wilkes-Barre, PA
Daniel K. Heers	Assistant Director/Operations Manager	Dallas, TX
Scott F. Hill, Ph.D.	Olympic Planner	Salt Lake City, UT
Martha A. Kearns	National Educational Initiatives Manager, EES	VACO
D. Charlene Koonce	Executive Officer for Planning	VISN 8, Bay Pines, FL
Joanne M. Krumberger	Manager of Performance Improvement	Milwaukee, WI
Patricia Hryzak Lind	Nurse Executive	Canandaigua, NY
Pui-Man Paul Low, M.D.	Clinical Manager	VISN 12, Hines, IL
Chris P. Lujan	Regional Mgr, Readjustment Counseling Service	Dallas, TX
Robert P. McDivitt	Chief Operating Officer	VISN 23, Minn., MN
Jeffrey C. Oak, Ph.D.	Associate CFO for Compl. & Business Integrity	VACO
Michael A. Rabdau	Veterans Canteen Service Washington Liaison	Washington, DC
Jeffrey M. Robbins, M.D.	Director, Podiatric Service	Cleveland, OH
Richard D. Roth, D.D.S.	Chief, TVHS Dental Service	Nashville, TN
Gurmukh Singh, M.D., Ph.D.	Chief, Medical Officer	VISN 4, Pittsburgh, PA
Jacob Steingart, Ed.D.	Team Leader, East Los Angeles Vet Center	Los Angeles, CA
Bruce E. Stewart	Chief Operating Officer	Walla Walla, WA
Roxie L. Tabor	Acting Associate Director	Shreveport, LA
Gary D. Trende	VA Learning University Online Coordinator	Brecksville, OH
Alan J. Tyler	Acting Director/Chief Operating Officer	Leeds, MA
David A. Weber, Ph.D.	Deputy CO, Office of Research Compl. Assurance	VACO
Judith A. Zboyovski	Quality Management Officer/Planner	VISN 4, Erie, PA

A HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO LVA 2002 SELECTEES

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Richard C. Braley	Executive Assistant to the Associate Deputy Under Secretary for Operations (West)	VACO
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Joyce A. Cange	Coach Veterans Service Center/Public Affairs Officer	Detroit, MI
Willie C. Clark, Sr.	Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager	St. Petersburg, FL
Kay E. Collins	Coach/Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager	Boise, ID
Grace A. Cooper	Loan Production Officer	St. Paul, MN
Maryalice Graham	Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Officer	Buffalo, NY
Frank M. Kush	Project Manager/Laboratory Supervisor Compensation & Pension Systems Development Laboratory	Washington, DC
Erica G. Lewis, J.D.	Loan Specialist, Loan Guaranty Service	VACO
Shelley A. Mullins	Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager	Nashville, TN
John M. Peterson	Veterans Service Center Manager	Ft. Harrison, MT
Cheryl J. Rawls	Lead Management Analyst, Office of Field Operations	VACO
William F. Russo, J.D.	Attorney-Advisor, Compensation & Pension Service	VACO
Marie Slusarz Causley	Chief, Projects Management Division, Office of Resource Management	VACO

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

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Cheryl L. Row	Director, Memorial Service Network III	Lakewood, CO

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Mary Ann Flynn, J.D.	Acting Principal Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Professional Staff Group VII	VACO
Patricia J. Geffner, J.D.	Assistant Regional Counsel	Los Angeles, CA
Denis M. McNamara, J.D.	Assistant Regional Counsel	Milwaukee, WI

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Milo H. Hawley, J.D.	Attorney - Adviser	VACO
Joy A. McDonald, J.D.	Attorney - Adviser	VACO

A HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO LVA 2002 SELECTEES (Continued)

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Melissa A. Powell	Team Leader, Acquisition Planning, Automation & Administration, Office of Acquisition & Materiel Management	VACO

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